



# Institutional: Linkages

## *Keeping the Environmental Ethic Alive*

**S**ummary: Many colleges and universities have alumni involvement in sport teams or outing clubs. The Dartmouth Environmental Network (DEN) is unique in connecting alumni with campus “greening” activities and students pursuing environmental careers. The DEN dates back to the late eighties when the college’s Environmental Studies program was in its infancy. Since those early years, the DEN has grown to more than 500 members and is engaged in environmental career counseling as well as efforts to promote dialogue on “greening” the campus and creating a sustainable Dartmouth community.

## Project Goals & Objectives

The Dartmouth Environmental Network (DEN) was formed in 1989 with a mission to:

1. Create a forum to provide communication between alumni and members of the Dartmouth community on a range of environmental topics.
2. Support a growing Environmental Studies program.
3. Provide career advice to students.

The DEN mission has evolved to also:

4. Use the DEN network to assist alumni and students contemplating environmental careers with guidance, information and contacts.
5. Utilize alumni environmental knowledge and resources to improve environmental programs and initiatives on campus and in the Dartmouth community.

## Description

Over the last few years, the “problems” have included:

- A difficult economy in which networking and environmental career support to students and alumni is greatly needed and appreciated.
- The traditional “town/gown” conflicts over growth, expansion, traffic, etc. in which Dartmouth alumni have personal interest and can bring professional expertise to the table.
- A perceived lack of on-campus coordination of environmental affairs – between the College’s own departments and staff, and the three growing student environmental groups which have a strong presence on campus.

These issues, together with a heightened environmental consciousness, have provided an opportunity for DEN to assist the Dartmouth community by hosting forums for discussion of key campus sustainability issues and identifying and leveraging key alumni resources for those interested in environmental careers.

## Dartmouth

### Campus Profile

**Dartmouth College**

Hanover, NH

**FT Undergrads:** 4,079

**FT Grad Students:** 2,470

**Graduate programs:** 19

**FT Faculty:** 380

**Campus Operating Budget:**

\$511.4 million for FY '02

**Endowment:** \$2.2 billion

(2002)

**# of Buildings:** 176

**Size of Campus:** 4 million sf

### Retrofit Dorms To Be More Energy Efficient

In 2002, DEN sponsored a symposium entitled “Growing Green Together: Hanover and Dartmouth.” College staff, faculty and town officials shared their views on a range of relevant and important issues.

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## Pre-Project Considerations

The following organizational and administrative issues were considered. The answers to these questions are addressed in the next section “Steps Taken.”

- What is the mission of the organization?
- What is the best organizational structure and affiliation to the university?
- What services will DEN provide its members?
- Will there be a campus presence for the organization?
- Will there be dues for membership in DEN?
- How will DEN communicate with its members?
- How will DEN reach out to a broader constituency?
- Will the organization do fundraising for specific projects?



## Steps Taken

### Formation and Evolution of the Dartmouth Environmental Network

1. In 1989, a loosely knit group of alumni formed with a mission to promote awareness of environmental issues and professional opportunities.
2. DEN was created as a “Friends” organization, similar to “Friends of Dartmouth Football” and many other alumni groups.
3. The original DEN had a “campus presence” because of its focus on the development of the Environmental Studies program.
4. A dues structure was created. Students do not pay a fee. Other members pay an annual fee of \$35.00 or less, depending on their year of graduation.
5. Beginning in 1990, a DEN member directory was created and DEN began hosting an annual campus career panel.
6. DEN initiated the “DEN Award”, awarded each year to a member of the College faculty, staff or alumni/ae who has made a particularly significant contribution to the environmental field.
7. In 2000, the DEN expanded its mission to include informing the Dartmouth Community about developments in green technology and sustainability concepts and initiatives.
8. The DEN Membership Directory was updated and made web accessible in 2001.
9. DEN sponsored “Growing Green at Dartmouth” and assisted Dartmouth in hosting the “Greening of the Ivies” conference in 2002.
10. In 2003, there are over 500 members, nearly half of whom remain active in the organization. Fundraising for DEN has been discussed, but has not been actively undertaken. Current membership activities have focused on expanding the membership, attracting recent graduates, and hosting regional social events.

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## Participants

Membership in DEN is open to students (undergraduate and graduate), alumni/ae, faculty, administrators and staff of the college. The makeup of the DEN includes alumni who serve as environmental attorneys, “green” architects, corporate environmental, health and safety professionals, scientists, teachers, staff at environmental organizations as well as students and faculty.

The website is managed by a member of the DEN council and members are responsible for logistics associated with forums or workshops. Costs of these events may be shared with other campus environmental organizations or the environmental studies department.

## Performance and Benefits

- Membership has grown to more than 500.
- An on-line DEN member directory is available to its members, students, faculty and administrators. It includes contact information and short biographies of members to encourage networking.
- An environmental job listing can be found at [www.dartmouth.edu/~csrc/careers/env.html](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~csrc/careers/env.html)
- “The Green Magazine”, the DEN’s official magazine, is published at the beginning of each term.
- Conferences or workshops are hosted each year for the purpose of raising campus and community awareness of advances in the field.
- Career panels for students and alumni contemplating career changes are hosted annually.
- In the Fall of 2000, DEN sponsored a forum on Green Residence Halls which brought together all of the “stakeholders” in the College’s planning, design and building process. The gathering emphasized the importance of coordinating green building initiatives already underway in these different departments at the College. Six months later, the College announced an institutional commitment – that all new construction at the College attain at least a “silver” LEED rating by the U.S. Green Building Council.

DEN will host its first internship in the summer of 2004 at the workplace of an active DEN member. The internship at an environmental not-for-profit organization may spur other DEN members to facilitate or host similar internships. The duties of the intern will be primarily to assist the DEN member in environmental research, although some time will be allocated to organizing DEN activities.



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## Lessons Learned

1. The key to starting an alumni environmental organization is a group of dedicated “officers” who have a good network of their own, together with a compelling mission such that others in the field will join.
2. The DEN membership has served as an effective bridge between the college and the community on broad environmental issues. The public forums and workshops have been very productive.
3. Such a network can be started on a shoestring budget. The minimum DEN budget is only \$2,000 per year.
4. Alumni can provide a very useful role in engaging the college on green issues and providing resources to effectively implement goals.
5. It is important to build an engaged volunteer network in regions outside of the local College area. The first ever “Regional DEN Alumni Event” was held in Washington, DC in 2003 and was a great success.
6. An on-campus contact is essential in keeping the program visible and the membership informed of the real issues (and opportunities) in the community.
7. Fundraising has been difficult because key members of the organization are no longer on campus.

## For Further Information

Dartmouth Environmental Network or DEN at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~den> or

RWG at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~rwg>

Environmental careers at [www.dartmouth.edu/~csrc/careers/env.html](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~csrc/careers/env.html)

## Other Successful Programs

A first-ever social event for environmental professional alumni of Tufts University occurred in March 2004 (see [http://www.tufts.edu/tie/getting\\_involved/alumni\\_event.html](http://www.tufts.edu/tie/getting_involved/alumni_event.html)). Part of the evening’s agenda was to discuss an ongoing environmental alumni network. We hope to update this section in the future as we learn of other formal environmental alumni affiliations at colleges and universities.

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